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C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 003963

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [TH](#)

SUBJECT: THAKSIN SAYS IT AGAIN, "I'LL TAKE A BREAK"

REF: A. BANGKOK 03916 (WHAT'S THAKSIN UP TO?)

[1](#)B. BANGKOK 3349 (NOODLES WITH THAKSIN)

Classified By: Ambassador Ralph L. Boyce. reason 1.4 (b) (d)

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: PM Thaksin told a visiting American academic that he would not return as prime minister after the new elections, but he planned to lead his party to victory, and remain an MP and party leader for several more years. He continued his attacks on the 'elite' that were trying to unseat him, and particularly Privy Council President General Prem Tinsulanonda. Although Thaksin keeps telling foreign interlocutors that he will step back after the new Parliament is formed, his combative rhetoric leads many Thai to presume he is trying to cling to his position, exacerbating already high levels of political tension. END SUMMARY

[1](#)2. (C) PM Thaksin met with Karl Jackson, Dean of SAIS, (strongly protect) on July 4, and covered familiar themes. Jackson told the Ambassador that Thaksin was clearly under enormous pressure, but did not give any indication of being under the influence of tranquilizers (ref A). He continued his attack on Privy Council President Gen. Prem Tinsulanonda, saying that Prem thought that a Privy Councillor was higher than a Prime Minister and that the political 'elite' of the country think Thaksin is 'a peasant.' He claimed that many of his opponents are 'living off land given them by the palace' and said that the courts were being used in an anti-democratic fashion. Renewing his personal assault on Prem, he referred to the "(expletive deleted) democracy from the gay opposition." (Note: a slur on Prem's sexual orientation.) He hinted darkly at the threat of a coup or assassination attempt, and said that he had decided not to go to Germany for the World Cup final due to the uncertain political situation.

[1](#)3. (C) Thaksin turned from defiant to thoughtful when asked: isn't it time to cut a deal? He appeared to have no illusions about the possibility of returning as prime minister. He said, as he has told us before (ref B), that he would lead his Thai Rak Thai (TRT) to victory in the elections, then step aside; another TRT MP would become prime minister. He would remain party leader and an MP for several years, and then would retire from politics to enjoy his fortune. He envisioned a grand national coalition after the elections, in which he would work behind the scenes. If the Constitutional Court dissolved TRT and the Democrat party, he declared that he would delay the elections to allow the parties to re-form. He predicted that everything would be resolved within 45 days. Thaksin suggested that there is a 30 year cycle in Thai politics: 1946, 1976, and now 2006, were pivotal years of significant change.

[1](#)4. (C) COMMENT: Thaksin's combative stance has led many Thai

to believe he will try to cling to power and seek to return as PM after the election. We think that Thaksin himself isn't sure what he will do, but his story to foreign interlocutors is pretty consistent. He seems to recognize that, barring some radical change in the political climate, he will need to step back from the leadership for a while, at least. His refusal to state this now, however, is exacerbating the already high levels of tension. End comment.
BOYCE